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To: FS-objections-pacificsouthwest-regional-office <objections-pacificsouthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us>

Subject: Base to Base Gondola Project

I object to the chosen Alternative in the Final EIS/EIR for the Squaw Valley- Alpine Meadows Base to Base Gondola Project.

The original proposed alignment for the project has not been objectively analyzed from the beginning of the Agencies acceptance of the Alpine Meadows revised Master Plan. From the start of the project analysis, the USFS decision maker has not allowed the analysis of the project to be thoroughly conducted. The Agency made pre analysis decisions based on not liking the portion of the projects alignment through private property, due to its proximity to Wilderness boundary and potential impacts to an EAS species as originally proposed.

Initially the process was a separate EIS- EIR analysis which was a decision of the USFS. During scoping and public hearings the Agency decided to engage in a joint EIS/EIR analysis without respect to the analysis and public input prior to their change in the process. They mandated alternative selections to SVSH based on personal beliefs, prior to completion of the studies necessary for a solid EIS/EIR project review, and directed the applicant to abandon the original proposal prior to completion of the project analysis and develop other alternatives. While the project in the FROD will attain the applicants need to connect the two ski areas it has eliminated lift accessed skiing terrain on the Alpine Meadows portion of the project and forced removal of state of the art modern GAZEX avalanche control for the Buttress area on the Alpine Meadows side of the project. That area in the 1980's avalanched and covered the Alpine Meadows base area resulting in multiple deaths.

Traditional Avalanche mitigation, while adequate at the present time, will have to eventually change as the ability to utilize 105 ordinance for control, will in the future, not be viable. The decision to withdraw Gazex avalanche mitigation due to the selected alternative not going over the Buttress is an unfortunate delay of the inevitable operational changes that need to occur for Alpine Meadows. Agency personnel brought bias into the project from the beginning on ESA, Social, Operational and Environmental issues prior to the start of qualitative work on the projects impacts. SVSH had no choice but to abandon their original proposed action as the decision maker indicated that there would not be approval of the original project. This occurred prior to a qualitative EIS analysis and completing the DROD. SVSH had no choice but to develop other alternatives including the selected one in the FROD. The original proposed action by SCVSH is the best overall alternative for the environment, enhanced ski area operations and the use of property by the private land owner of property in the middle of the project.

Jim Spent